1. Phonology

1.1 Consonants

Labial	Alveo-dental	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
	t		k	
b	d	j	g	
f	s	š		h
m	n		ŋ	
	l,r			
w		y		

The consonants [z, c, k', x, ?] occur in loanwords from Tigre and Arabic.

Length ("gemination") of consonants is distinctive, e.g. kal-e, "I will eat", kall-e, "I ate."

Pre-nasalized stops [mb, nd, ŋg] and labiovelars [kw, gw, ŋgw] occur. These will be treated as sequences.[1]

1.2 Vowels

The usual five-vowel system /i u e o a/ is found. Length is distinctive, e.g. kito, "blood", ki:to, "he arrived"; dagan-, "also" (?), da:gan, "refuse, send away, persecute."[2]

2. Word Shape

2.1 Syllables. Consonant-Vowel (CV) or Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) syllables are usual. Initial Syllables can be V, VC or CCV. Words mostly have one or two syllables, but can have three, four, five, or (rarely) more.

2.2 Stress. Stress may come on any syllable and can cause change of meaning, e.g. 'iŋŋa "you (singular)", iŋ'ŋa "you (plural)". When the first of two CV syllables is stressed, the second C becomes doubled with short vowels: 'CVCV→'CVCCV. e.g. ku'yidda ku'yidda (lit. man-this-and man-this-and), i.e. "this man and this man".

2.3 Tone. At least two significant tones occur: normal and high. E.g. desso "he vomited désso "he sent him"
du "he has" dú "he dies"

Normal tone is unmarked.

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